PEACE CORPS volunteer

OCTOBER 1968

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Toward a social revolution

In a candid "interview" with himself, the author talks about concepts of social change and how they apply to his personal experience as a Volunteer in an emerging Peace Corps program—leadership training.

A social revolution is beginning in the Ecuadorian countryside, as in many other parts of the world. Sparked in some areas by agrarian reform, sometimes encouraged by the efforts of local development agencies, change is coming to the indigenous peoples of Ecuador.

Perceptible in this country only to close observers and only in some areas, this process will gather force as it progresses. It may already be irreversible. It is not a revolution in schoolbuilding, road construction, and sheepraising; though these are inevitably some of its manifestations. Nor is it a revolution in the formation of cooperatives, labor unions or other community organizations; these, too, are both tools and results of the process. It is a revolution in attitudes —a revolution in the ways men view themselves and the world. It will eventually shatter the bonds of tradition and social class which, since the days of the Spanish conquest and beyond, have confined the Indian to the abject, fatalistic world of his community.

There is a role for outsiders in this process. It is not for us to make a revolution, for our credentials are insufficient and our tools inadequate to the task. But it is possible for us to facilitate the process—to seek out those who are leading it, to help them understand their potential and their responsibility to their communities, and to foster cross-fertilization of ideas and concerns among them.

To influence the processes of change, we must work in those areas where changes already underway foster in the people the propensity for further change. We must devote much of our effort to those individuals in whom this propensity is strongest. Within those areas, and with those individuals, we can enable rather than promote change, accept and encourage it, occasionally insinuate it, never impose it. *Los cambios los hacen ellos que los hacen*—changes are made by those who make them.

After you've been a "community developer" in the campo for a while, it begins to dawn on you that the school you want to build or the cooperative you want to organize doesn't have much relevance to the people of the community if they're engaged in a tense battle over land or water rights with a big landowner. If they're not concerned about land or water rights or something else that is obviously fundamental to their existence, you might wonder whether the school or cooperative isn't even less relevant. Of course, if you're a loyal community developer, you can always rationalize that the idea for the school or cooperative is theirs, but that's more likely to be a con-job than not.

Sooner or later, all of us ask ourselves, "What can we hope to accomplish?" Are the two years a waste of time? Some Volunteers answer yes. Is it a meaningful personal experience, but largely irrelevant to the people of the community? Is it an opportunity to pursue some personal interest together with others in the "host country" who have a mutual interest? Is it a chance to participate in the process of economic development as a bearer of North American technology or ideals? These are commonly held views, and from the point of view of Peace Corps as an institution they may have equal validity. Apparently, they have personal validity for many Volunteers as individuals. But we're deluding ourselves if we think that any of these views is necessarily relevant to the processes of social development which are changing the world. We may be satisfying ourselves. We may be satisfying the powers-that-be in the countries where we work, because we pose them no threat. We may even be satisfying many humble people, who enjoy or profit from the activities which we sponsor. But we're not relevant to the process of change if this is all we strive to accomplish.

About two years ago a few of us who had been troubled by some of these ideas started getting together to talk things over. We'd been working in our own sites in different parts of the country. I don't think you could say that we were basically dissatisfied with the Peace Corps, though we had a lot of gripes, but we weren't really satisfied with what we were doing. We sat down to look for ways to help each other. After some correspondence and a couple of meetings, we worked up a plan to concentrate our efforts in two sites, where two of us had been working—both crucial areas in the highlands where the agrarian reform program had been struggling along. We thought if we would concentrate on the community leaders in those sites, we might achieve the impact we felt was eluding us as individuals. We got support from staff and began early last year.

We talked about what we had learned in the field, what we had experienced in training, and some of the things we had studied in school. It didn't all hang together, but we came to a few conclusions: that a community developer can't make things change, that if we wanted to be a part of change we had to work where the people want to change or where they have to change, and that

By MAL WARWICK

we really couldn't accomplish a lot working individually and alone. These were our conclusions—they don't necessarily apply everywhere and not everybody here would agree.

A concept of education

Education is a process by which men learn to understand themselves and the reality in which they live. It is not limited to the absorption of information and the acquisition of skills, mechanical or intellectual. These are adjunct to the process. It is not that which is imparted; it is that which is learned by experience and integrated into behavior. The result—the goal—is change; change in one's concept of himself and of his environment.

The role of the teacher in this process of education is that of catalyst, stimulator and enabler. He can offer time and a locale. He can assemble resources for learning and structure them in various ways. But education is fostered not by physical resources or intellectual environment, rather by honest dialogue among teachers, students and others, in groups of two or more and in each man alone. If the teacher is to influence this process, he must therefore offer himself.

Education in this sense opens men to change. As it fosters self-understanding—not a single, blinding flash of insight, but a continuous process of honest self-evaluation—it encourages a questioning of one's environment. As the humanity of one's self begins to emerge in his thinking, authority figures come to be seen as human beings, filled with understandable desires and fraught with many frustrations. Old concepts of authority begin to fall by the wayside. As one comes to understand the way in

People of Unión Base, one of eight villages in the Comuna, listen as an agricultural extensionist discusses a new crop.

BUILDING A COMMUNITY

The Comuna San Jacinto is a large tract of land which was granted to a group of about 100 Indian families, most of them Quechua-speaking, about 20 years ago by the Ecuadorian government. It is, in effect, a reservation. Because the people of the community are only gradually changing from a nomadic hunting and fishing culture to one of sedentary agriculture and cattle-raising, they have not fully used the land which is their property in common. Colonization, which brings landless people from the mountains to the open lands of the Oriente, has put pressure on the community; outsiders—including land speculators—have begun to occupy some of the communal lands. The Cabildo, or government of the Comuna, has begun to take an interest in defending the communal lands and is engaged in an attempt to educate the people of the community about the involved legal problems which threaten their future. Some legal actions already undertaken by the Cabildo have helped regain land and obtain fairer prices for it. In addition, the effectiveness of the Cabildo has been strengthened. Peace Corps Volunteers have worked with the people of San Jacinto since March, 1966. The area is one of several in which the community education and leadership development program has been active.

—Mal Warwick

which others see the role he plays, he begins to think of community as an expression of human interaction. Restrictive traditions begin to crumble. Social institutions come to be seen as human group processes, fit subjects for evaluation and necessary change.

If men are to be truly effective agents of change, they must be capable of changing the way men think about themselves. And to do so, they must themselves be educated to self-understanding.

A lot has been said about the Peace Corps as an "educational institution." David Elliott (THE VOLUNTEER, *April, 1967*) *wrote about the Volunteer as simultaneously "teacher" and "student"—an actor in a two-way process of human interaction, changing and being changed. That's a constructive starting point, but if you accept it whole, you realize it really doesn't matter what sort of activity you're engaged in or what sector of society you're working with. Why not make the teacher/student concept a job definition, pick out the most crucial of the neglected sectors of society—here, the rural people, particularly the leadership—and aim for real social impact? That's one way of thinking about what we're trying to do here in the rural leadership training program—my way, not necessarily anyone else's.*

This view of the Volunteer as a teacher/student is a view of education as an "unstructured" process. It's what every Volunteer takes part in simply by interacting with other human beings. Perhaps a community developer makes it more consciously a part of his work than some others.

We also get together here from time to time in groups, to run "leadership training courses" and the like. These are really just an intensification of the process. At one time, in one place, we get a number of teacher/students who are Volunteers and other rural social promoters (campesinos *and agency people) together with a number of other teacher/students, who are* campesinos. *A course of this sort can create a special atmosphere which stimulates honest interchange and provides the advantages of group interaction.*

Campesinos, *like all other people, learn what they want to learn—what's relevant to them. You can present them with whatever ideas or facts you like, but unless those ideas or*

The riverbank at the village of Puerto Santa Ana.

Volunteer and citizen converse with the president of the Comuna.

facts are presented in a way that's relevant to campesinos, *they won't understand you. Such a miniscule part of learning comes about through the educational process as it's generally defined. Everyone learns most of what he knows through his own experience, and experience is usually determined by a lot of unpredictable and largely uncontrollable things. It's absurd to think that we or anybody else can "create" leaders—heredity and child-rearing practices are probably more important in leadership development than we are. What we can hope to do is help a little.*

Training for a revolutionary role in development

Writing of their experience in the training of Peace Corps Volunteers, Roger Harrison and Richard Hopkins maintain that the trainer must seek "to 1) develop in the student more independence of external sources of decision, information, problem definition, and motivation; 2) develop in the student the 'emotional muscle' he needs to deal constructively with the strong feelings which are created by conflict and confrontation of values and attitudes; 3) enable him to make choices and commitments to action in situations of stress and uncertainty; and 4) encourage him to use his own and others' feelings, attitudes, and values as *information* in defining and solving human problems."

The trainer, sparing the use of his authority and of his intellectual gifts, must influence rather than direct the learner, bringing him to an understanding of this process and to a realization of the need for constant evaluation.

Whether the change agent is to be a Peace Corps Volunteer or a rural leader, he must recognize the role of attitudes before he can understand them; understand them before he can grapple with them; and grapple with them before he can change them. Recognition of his own attitudes is the first step in this process.

This spring ten of us working in the campesino *leadership program collaborated with the Peace Corps Training Center at Escondido, California to train a new group of Volunteers for the program. Five of us were Volunteers, two were "agency counterparts" and three were* campesino *leaders. We drew on our experiences as community developers in the field in Ecuador and as trainees in Puerto Rico in 1965, to help develop a training program that could begin to prepare new Volunteers for a constructive and rewarding role as teacher/students in the* campo.

All sorts of labels are pinned to the kind of training we've tried to provide both to campesinos *and to Peace Corps trainees: "group dynamics," "sensitivity training," "experience-based," "unstructured," "nondirective," and so forth. Some of these names refer to aspects of the training, others are more general, but none of them is very important. They may even be misleading. The same might be said for many of the techniques often employed in this kind of training. What is important—in training, in field work, in all education, and in life—are constant things: honesty, self-evaluation, trust.*

When you put these ideas in their general form, it can seem a little farfetched that the problems are similar and that education to help the individual cope with them is similar in all cultures.

Take a Peace Corps Volunteer—in just about any town—who is despondent because he can't "find work." "Nothing works." "You can't do anything in this country." He won't try any of the Rep's suggestions, he won't follow up on any of his own good ideas, and he won't go home. Is his

Villagers gather to discuss the regulations of the Comuna.

problem really very much different from that of the peasant who refuses to try out chemical fertilizers because "God hasn't willed it" or to learn to read and write because "even the Indians who read and write don't stand a chance"? Obviously, in both cases, suggestions are inadequate. A new project idea or inexpensive fertilizers, even if they seem to be accepted, will solve nothing. The problem is within the individual and only he can solve it. This is why only rarely do development programs work.

Therefore, one of the basic concepts which we're trying to employ is that of the campesino as a teacher. If he can overcome himself and his unthinking deference to authority, if he can come to believe in himself as an authority valid for himself and for his fellows, he can probably become a better teacher of campesinos than any outsider. In many areas, this ideal is a necessity, because in Ecuador there are few people other than Indians who can speak the language of the Indians, which is Quechua. Unfortunately, the same is generally true of Volunteers.

Broadening the concept of rural community development

Stimulus for change only rarely arises unaided within the community, and development is impeded by social and economic forces much broader and stronger than any local institution. In order to achieve lasting change, a program in rural community development must focus on the village, not as an isolated community but as one element in the larger society. In short, the community developer must strive to intensify communications among the villagers not only within the communities in which they live but among those communities as well. If the village itself is an interlocking network of social institutions, formal and informal, so, too, is the society.

Meaningful change will occur in the community only if it is encouraged by changes in the society at large. And if the development of viable, representative institutions is a long, painstaking process within a single village, it is that much more intricate and tedious on a larger scale. It is a process which is beginning to occur in Ecuador. Almost certainly, it will continue. It can be reinforced and accelerated.

Underdevelopment is in the minds of countless individuals, and it's there that it must be attacked first. But it is also a societal phenomenon. If change is going to take place, large numbers of individuals have to change themselves, and together try to change their society.

The campesino leadership program in Ecuador is an attempt to play a part in this process. We're trying to change ourselves. We're trying to work together, in teams and as a larger group. And we're trying to work with the people in rural Ecuador who are looking for change, who have a chance of attaining it, and who can work with others like themselves on a larger scale.

Though it's a little unreal, the program outline of the campesino leadership effort is simply stated. About two dozen Volunteers and about an equal number of Ecuadorians, mostly campesinos and mostly unpaid, are presently working together in four selected regions of the country, two in the central highlands and two in the lowlands of the Amazon basin, in a development effort supported by the Peace Corps, the Ecuadorian Institute of Agrarian Reform and Colonization, and the Agency for International Development.

We're treading dangerous ground when we talk about things like "social change" and "revolution." The necessity for change might seem obvious to us, but it can be repugnant to an Ecuadorian. If you're on the side of change, you're not on everybody's side. On the other hand, if you're on the side of the status quo—that is, if you're doing nothing to change it—you have another set of enemies automatically. Even if we don't dichotomize "status quo vs. change," we can't pretend that there aren't large numbers of people here who do. One way or another, though, everyone makes his choice. He becomes a part of what's happening, or he ignores it, or he rejects it.

This isn't the most fruitful way to look at the question. "Revolution's" a hackneyed word in this part of the world, and we're not talking about joining the guerrillas or demonstrating in the streets. That hasn't gotten Ecuadorians very far, and without any question it would get us kicked out of the country.

A much more useful way to look at this problem is to ask yourself if you're not really imposing your own values—North American values—on a culture in which they're alien. If we're really honest with our friends, if we don't try to tell them but to be with them, then there's no imposition of anything. True, none of us can be completely honest all of the time. But impose values? It does seem a little pompous to believe that we can. Have you ever tried to talk about the Puritan virtues to a group of im-

Village representatives plan a mass education campaign.

passive peasants? Of course, there's an explicit bias toward change in what we do, but there's no compulsion about it. If a man wants to change, he changes, and if he doesn't, we can't oblige him to.

Programming as the evolution of a response

No blueprint or model will assure the success of a program of change. Community development, and training for it, depend upon the sensitivity of the change agent to human needs. A programmed response to these needs will necessarily change constantly, just as needs are modified by changing circumstances.

It is essential that any development program evolve from experience in the field; it cannot be programmed onto reality. Likewise, all programming decisions must be made by those who will execute them—Volunteers, rural leaders and agency personnel, or whoever is involved in the program. And effective effort in community development cannot be planned or directed from the top down.

When we began thinking about how we could work together to face the problem of our isolation and of the isolation of the campesino, we settled upon a plan to offer on-site leadership training courses to rural leaders in two sites where Volunteers had been working for about a year. We staged two of them early in 1967. It was a good idea, and it worked in some respects, but we found that to a certain extent we were increasing the isolation of the village leaders by pulling them out of their villages for the courses and by not having enough time to do adequate follow-up afterwards. So we decided to begin the formal training process at a more basic level, directly in each of the villages. That seems to work fairly well, but takes a great deal of time and effort. We also found that short field trips included in the courses were successful, so we've carried out a number of them independently.

Last year we tried to run an "advanced course" in community development for the most promising leaders in the areas where we had been working. It failed, for a lot of reasons —bad timing, bad location, etc. But we're planning to try again next year using a new model. As usual, we'll probably base the course on nondirective, small group discussions and on a number of practical activities which the campesinos design.

It's a little difficult to list the problems we've encountered, because most of them are so intensely personal. Each of us has experienced his own problems—the difficulty of being honest with oneself, the difficulty of communicating with a campesino in a third language when you're midway through the second, and, inevitably, the problems of teamwork. As it is, we spend a good deal of time trying to work out problems among ourselves.

As a group, we've had few external problems. The agencies participating in the program have been understanding and helpful. The Peace Corps staff, in particular, has given excellent backstopping and moral support without trying to fit us or the program into a preconceived programming mold or into a personal view of things.

We're looking for ideas. We're looking for new ways to stimulate the educational process. If we limit ourselves to the field work and to "leadership training courses" on various levels, we'd probably fall into a rut. We're looking into ways to use communications techniques in the program. We're helping several campesino leaders to obtain scholarships for specialized study abroad. There's some interest, still unorganized, in setting up a teatro campesino, a troubador band of campesinos to stage skits and songs in rural communities to stimulate discussion of campesino problems. A couple of people are organizing a legal aid society, to direct the interest and good will of recent law graduates toward the legal problems of rural communities. A number of Ecuadorian university students are living on-site with some of the Volunteers in the program. It's a little difficult to call all of this a "program." One of the things that holds it together, we hope, is that we're trying to work with one another.

As agents of change, our goal must be the education of the villager—to self-understanding, to a consciousness of community, and to a national conscience. Such an approach will not change the face of Ecuador, or of any other country—but the rural leaders with whom we work, if they are in fact themselves changed, may well do so some day.

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ON THE COVER: Volunteers John and Nancy Wilkinson on holiday at the Temple of the Emerald Buddha in Bangkok, Thailand. Their visit was photographed with a "fisheye" lens by Carl Purcell, whose foot is visible at lower right.

A former evaluator tells why agency concentration on the Volunteer has become

The Peace Corps fetish

By PARK TETER

The underlying reason why many Volunteers have failed to understand or contribute significantly to the needs of their host countries has been the expectations Volunteers place on themselves. What is the process by which these expectations have been formed?

When a recruit enters the Peace Corps, his expectations are usually vague. He is not sure what the Peace Corps is all about, but he probably has a variety of notions about the role a Volunteer can or should play. What he begins to expect of himself will be largely determined by the evident expectations of the training staff, with returned Volunteers providing, perhaps, the most credible model. If those returned Volunteers are determined to "tell it like it is," or to fortify the uninitiated against the shock ahead, or to discount in advance any disappointment or guilt, or to rationalize their own imperfect success, the trainee is likely to get the idea that the Peace Corps expects him to do little more than survive.

What the Volunteer expects of himself, perhaps in spite of training, usually remains tentative until he encounters the real thing overseas. There, the opinions and examples of Volunteers already in the country may raise some doubts about his expectations, though some will privately vow that they will not sink into that state of mind and performance.

If the novice is less than satisfied with the role touted by more experienced Volunteers, the staff's expectations of him will greatly affect his expectations. Indeed these expectations of the staff will have already greatly influenced the outlook and example presented by earlier Volunteers. The extent to which staff expects Volunteers to become involved with host nationals is communicated primarily by their own example. Even Volunteers who resist the mood of training, staff, and their peers, when they encounter the great obstacles to satisfying relations with host nationals, find a velvet retreat prepared for them.

It would be easy to attribute some Volunteers' turning their backs on host nationals to local causes—a hangover from a lackadaisical previous director, the tourist charms of the country, the pattern of expatriate life established by former colonialists. But to a greater or lesser extent, this same retreat from the natives is evident in Peace Corps countries without such attributes. A surprising number of Volunteers, whatever their expectations when they first entered the Peace Corps, do not expect to have their most meaningful and constructive experiences among local friends and colleagues.

The character of these local friends and colleagues naturally inhibits the Volunteer. Foreign colonies and immigrant groups everywhere tend to hang together. But the Peace Corps Volunteer is expected to overcome this natural tendency. Or is he?

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What has produced Peace Corps' expectations of its Volunteers? At first, an ideal. But since the giddy plunge into the unknown, the Peace Corps—even with its limited memory—has learned a great deal. What has it learned from experience? To answer that, we must consider *how* the Peace Corps learns from experience.

By and large, individuals in the agency learn from their *own* experience. For many, this includes experience as Volunteers, a fact which has introduced considerable realism into decision making. Recognizing that such experience also may limit the development of the Peace Corps through inbreeding, the agency continues to engage staff with no Volunteer experience. Though the burden of proof is usually on those who have never been Volunteers (perhaps more in their own minds than among returned Volunteers), people from an extraordinary variety of previous experience are seriously listened to in the Peace Corps.

Despite this variety of previous backgrounds, day-to-day life within the Peace Corps provides a common experience which helps to give the Movement its identity. Whatever their specific tasks, the daily problems faced and the daily decisions made focus around one thing: the Volunteer.

The recruiter's assignment is to attract young Americans to the Peace Corps. He must spend his working hours discovering and deciding what appeals to American college graduates. The Office of Selection is re-

sponsible for refining criteria for choosing among different Americans. Field Selection Officers and Field Assessment Officers spend their time examining the character and commitment of individual Americans. The training staff has the distant host country in mind as a goal, but day in and day out it must deal with young Americans: their worries and hopes, their idealism and insensitivity, their skills and lack of skills, their individual differences and their conformism, their bellies and their psyches.

The overseas staff is geographically much closer to host nationals, but how is its time distributed between the Volunteers and the locals? Who fills the Peace Corps office, Volunteers or host country nationals? Who does the traveling field officer spend most of his time with, Peace Corps Volunteers or counterparts, students, and supervisors? Who does the director usually write to Washington about, the host national extension agents or the Peace Corps agriculture Volunteers; the Iranian students or the Peace Corps teachers; the Afghan nurses or the Volunteer nurses?

There are many reasons why the Peace Corps staff focuses on the Volunteer so much more than on the host nationals. For one thing, the problems of the Volunteers will not go away if neglected. The problems of host nationals don't really go away either, but the nationals are not as vocal or persistent as Volunteers, and they have no veterans lobby in the Washington office. Moreover, an overseas staff member usually knows that Washington judges his performance more on his relations with Volunteers than on his relations with host nationals and that Washington relies more on Volunteers than host country nationals as a source of information on his performance.

Any beleaguered staffer can give more reasons why his time is so taken up with Volunteers. Some would gladly trade a part of that toil for time spent among the local citizens; others accept a division of labor in which they deal with Volunteers and the Volunteers with the natives. Whatever prompts this de facto division of labor, and however the staff feels about it, its consequences are profound. Few things condition a man's frame of reference so thoroughly as his daily tasks. If those daily tasks are primarily concerned with the Volunteer—whether in recruiting, training, selection, field support, communication with Washington, decision-making in Washington, or evaluation—the identity of the organization will be focused on the Volunteer.

The problems of the Volunteers will not go away if neglected. The problems of host nationals don't really go away either, but the nationals are not as vocal or persistent as the Volunteers, and they have no veterans lobby in Washington.

I had thought the most damning cliche I could throw at the Peace Corps would be to charge that it is an organization of the Volunteer, by the Volunteer, and *for* the Volunteer. Apparently not. I recently read in a memorandum, stated as a self-evident moral axiom, that "The Peace Corps is essentially an organization of and for Volunteers." The same message has been implicit for a long time in the content of THE VOLUNTEER magazine, in recruiting advertisements, in discussions at the Berkeley conference, in Peace Corps forums, almost anywhere one turns.

I had thought the most damning cliche I could throw at the Peace Corps would be to charge that it is an organization of, by, and "for" the Volunteer. Apparently not.

What is the effect of this Peace Corps identity on the expectations Volunteers place on themselves? Among the mixed objectives with which they enter the Peace Corps, they find that those who ought to know what it is all about focus on the experience of the Volunteer. If that experience is, indeed, what the Peace Corps is all about, it is not surprising that Volunteers often spend their two years in pursuit of satisfying experiences for themselves. And when the organization spends so much of its time, staff and thought on the Volunteer, he naturally looks for that satisfying experience within his fascinating self. Peace Corps may tell him that he ought to direct his concern instead toward host country nationals, but then the message is: "Do as we say, not as we do."

When the organization spends so much of its time, staff and thought on the Volunteer, he naturally looks for that satisfying experience within his fascinating self.

Many of the problems of Volunteers with which staff must cope would shrink if the Volunteers were really aware of the joys and problems of their hosts. One of the most important functions of training and field support should be to guide Volunteers to an understanding of what their new friends and neighbors and students and colleagues aspire to, and what they are up against in their own country. For example, the agony of the single female Volunteer in a Moslem country could be considerably mitigated if training and field staff made the Volunteer more aware of the dreams and difficulties faced by the educated Moslem girl in her own country, among her own people.

This same approach must permeate each stage of the process by which the Volunteer's expectations of himself are formed. In public affairs and recruiting, the Peace Corps appeal should be based less on how the Volunteer will profit from the experience and more on the aspirations of people in underdeveloped countries. If the most active young Americans today are leaving Peace Corps behind for domestic problems it is not because they are attracted to the experiences offered them by government agencies and private organizations, but because they can see in newspapers and television the plight of the ghettos, because they can see smoke rising above their cities and the poor camped in their capital. If the plight of the poor and sick and uneducated and humiliated in other lands were made half as visible, we might not only be more successful in recruiting; the recruits we get might begin by expecting more of themselves and less for themselves.

In training, without neglecting efforts to force the Volunteers to appre-

ciate their own limitations, more attention should be directed toward the host nationals.

Case studies and returned Volunteers' war stories, for example, would not only include incidents involving relations between a Volunteer and a host country national but also incidents in which host nationals deal with one another.

The Volunteer's attention would then be directed not only toward himself or the impression he makes on others, but toward understanding the problems of others and joining them in the pursuit of solutions.

There are some useful gimmicks by which overseas staff can direct the concern of Volunteers away from themselves and toward host nationals. The director and his deputy, perhaps on alternating Sunday afternoons, can hold an "at home" at which any Volunteer or staff member is welcomed *provided* he bring a local friend with him. Meetings with Volunteers, whether as individuals or in conferences, can *begin* with questions about host nationals. Thus a field officer might greet a Volunteer not with "How are you?" but with "How's Ali Akbar?" A TEFL conference agenda might begin with the local student instead of refrigerator policy.

An evaluator interviewing Volunteers probably should not *begin* by asking about host country nationals because among his most revealing data is the subject the Peace Corps Volunteer chooses to give initial priority. It would be unfortunate, however, if the evaluator's later questions reflect more Peace Corps concern with the problem of the Volunteer than the problems of the people he is serving.

But even an evaluator, however saintly and enlightened, will never within his schedule be able to escape reliance on the Volunteer as his primary source of information. How then can anyone expect his earthly cousins on the lower floors and murky regions of the globe to rise above daily chores

In public affairs and recruiting, the Peace Corps appeal should be based less on how the Volunteer will profit from the experience and more on the aspirations of people in underdeveloped countries.

that demand attention to the ubiquitous Volunteers? Some devices may help compensate for this concentration, as may a greater awareness of the danger and its causes. But only an institutional change can alter the forces that now make the Peace Corps an organization not only of Volunteers and by Volunteers, but primarily for Volunteers.

The more time I spend within Peace Corps, the more I feel like a crank. But I have not yet overcome my feeling that there is something sick about an organization run for the sake of middle class American college graduates in the midst of people lacking food, education, strength and hope. To convert Peace Corps to an organization *for* host nationals, it might appear logical to make it an organization of them and by them. In the long run this would appear not only the means, but the goal. In the short run, concrete steps can be taken to

I have not yet overcome my feeling that there is something sick about an organization run for the sake of middle class American college graduates in the midst of people lacking food, education, strength and hope.

include more host participation on Peace Corps staff.

It would be a mistake, however, to view host national staff as sufficient means of redirecting Volunteers' concern from themselves to their neighbors. Although the presence of a host national staffer would demonstrate to Volunteers the Peace Corps' interest in the host country, it would not provide a model of the role the American can play in understanding and serving that country. That model could be provided by an American on the staff with the designated responsibility, the undiluted time, and the requisite skills to study the aspirations, problems and potential of the host nation.

To be an effective model of the concerned foreigner, he would have to work closely with host nationals, including those on the Peace Corps staff. The insights into the host country which this American and these host nationals reach together (with the help of Volunteers and other staff) would be invaluable for training and programming. They should even filter through to recruiting, selection, and evaluation. And once someone is assigned the responsibility of giving attention to the problems of host nationals, the agency will at last have practical means of compensating for the hundreds of people whose daily attention is necessarily focused on Volunteers.

If the Peace Corps is a vehicle to prepare, transport and sustain Americans in the service of others, then it should demand allegiance only to those others.

When Volunteers are less the center of attention of the agency which recruited, trained, selected, programmed, supported and evaluated them, they may pay a little more attention to their neighbors. But it is also necessary to make the agency less the center of attention of the Volunteers. This does not mean staff should lose touch with Volunteers in the name of encouraging Volunteers' self-reliance. But in its efforts to direct Volunteer concern toward host nationals the Peace Corps should *not* try to elicit loyalty to the Peace Corps, or the Peace Corps idea. If the Peace Corps is a vehicle to prepare, transport and sustain Americans in the service of others, then it should demand allegiance only to those others. It is much easier for Americans to believe in the Peace Corps idea than in the worth of a host country neighbor. By making a fetish of the Peace Corps we interpose between the Volunteer and his goal an object which in many ways is fascinating, but which too easily becomes a substitute for the real thing.

Park Teter joined the Office of Evaluation in September, 1967, and is currently completing a study of cultural training for North Africa and the Near East. He previously worked as an educational adviser in Iran and as a journalist in Washington. The above is adapted from a recent report on Peace Corps operations in one host country.

Campus ad designed and distributed by recruiters last year.

A Peace Corps problem in rural Latin America is

Finding jobs for women

By SALLY YUDELMAN

In one Latin American country, there are currently at least 75 girls in rural sites doing nothing, or, if occupied, they are wheel spinning. Recent close of service conferences were filled with girls who complained about lack of programming.

I propose the following strategy for programming women in Latin America:

First of all, we should place women *only* in roles which are acceptable within the Latin culture. This directs programming to four areas: education, social work, health, and home arts/nutrition.

• *Education*—This field is wide open since the majority of Latin teachers are women. The program, of course, would depend upon the total country plan. Women should not be placed in isolated rural communities but rather in towns or cities.

• *Social work*—This field has been very little investigated by the Peace Corps, but offers many possibilities for urban projects. Where agencies are oriented towards community action programs, where they have money, trained personnel and an on-going program, there is a potential for female Volunteers with an interest in social work to be placed with counterparts in an urban setting.

• *Health*—Nurses, yes, but in structured in-service training or teaching roles, *not* in health posts in the *campo*. The nurse is a technician and should be programmed for the multiplier effect. Since a Volunteer usually has time to do her own thing as well as a professional job, nurses should not feel constrained by such placement.

I think general health education is wheel spinning and at the bottom of the list of priorities of most host countries. Exceptions might be a specific disease control program which has funds, trained personnel administering the program at the top, and Ministry commitment and enough publicity to ensure reasonable success. In most Latin countries health budgets are barely sufficient to cover curative needs. The fact that we know that the infant mortality rate is horrendous does not guarantee we can do anything about it—*unless* the Ministry of Health has a strong program for which girls can be trained and in which they have a specific job.

• *Home Arts/Nutrition*—This field has been the tool of most rural Volunteers and has been abysmally unsuccessful. I cannot bear to see one more girl Volunteer totally on her own teaching a health education or nutrition class to a group of teenage girls or women in a rural area. The girls or women are usually there out of curiosity; the Volunteer works so hard, has terrific visual aids, and is completely unprepared to deal with the local superstitions as far as getting the girls or women, as the case may be, to change deeply ingrained attitudes.

How do you change the attitude of a peasant woman who is herself ill

malnourished, uneducated and worn out from childbirth? I submit it is *not* done by American females with good will, living and working in rural sites.

There are, however, certain conditions under which the single female can work successfully in rural areas.

One condition is working with an agency which has an effective program. This means that the agency has money, a plan of action, trained personnel who *travel* to the campo from a central town (where Volunteers can live reasonably). Associate directors will have to spend some time checking on the effectiveness of the program, the caliber of the personnel, their willingness to work with Peace Corps Volunteers, their suggestions as to how Volunteers should be trained, their participation in training, etc.

We should never permit single girls to be placed in rural sites to do either community development or home arts/nutrition, which means as little to most associate directors as it does to me.

The married female in rural areas presents another problem. She will usually be sacrificed to her husband's skill if he has one. So we just have to live with that problem and provide the wife with the skills necessary to bring economic improvement to *campesino* women. Several small cooperatives in one country have been quite successful.

However, some land reform agencies have expressed a preference for married couples living and working in colonization projects. Even so, the man will probably have a more specific job than the woman—hence the importance of training and a thorough orientation to the culture of the area in which she will work.

There are some fairly dramatic implications to this strategy if accepted:

—It means cutting down on single women in Latin American countries which will inevitably mean

—Turning down female applicants.

I believe the Peace Corps should turn down females rather than continue condemning girls to spending two years in areas where they 1) have no program, 2) are not acceptable to host country people as community development workers, and 3) receive little support or attention—except negative—from most directors.

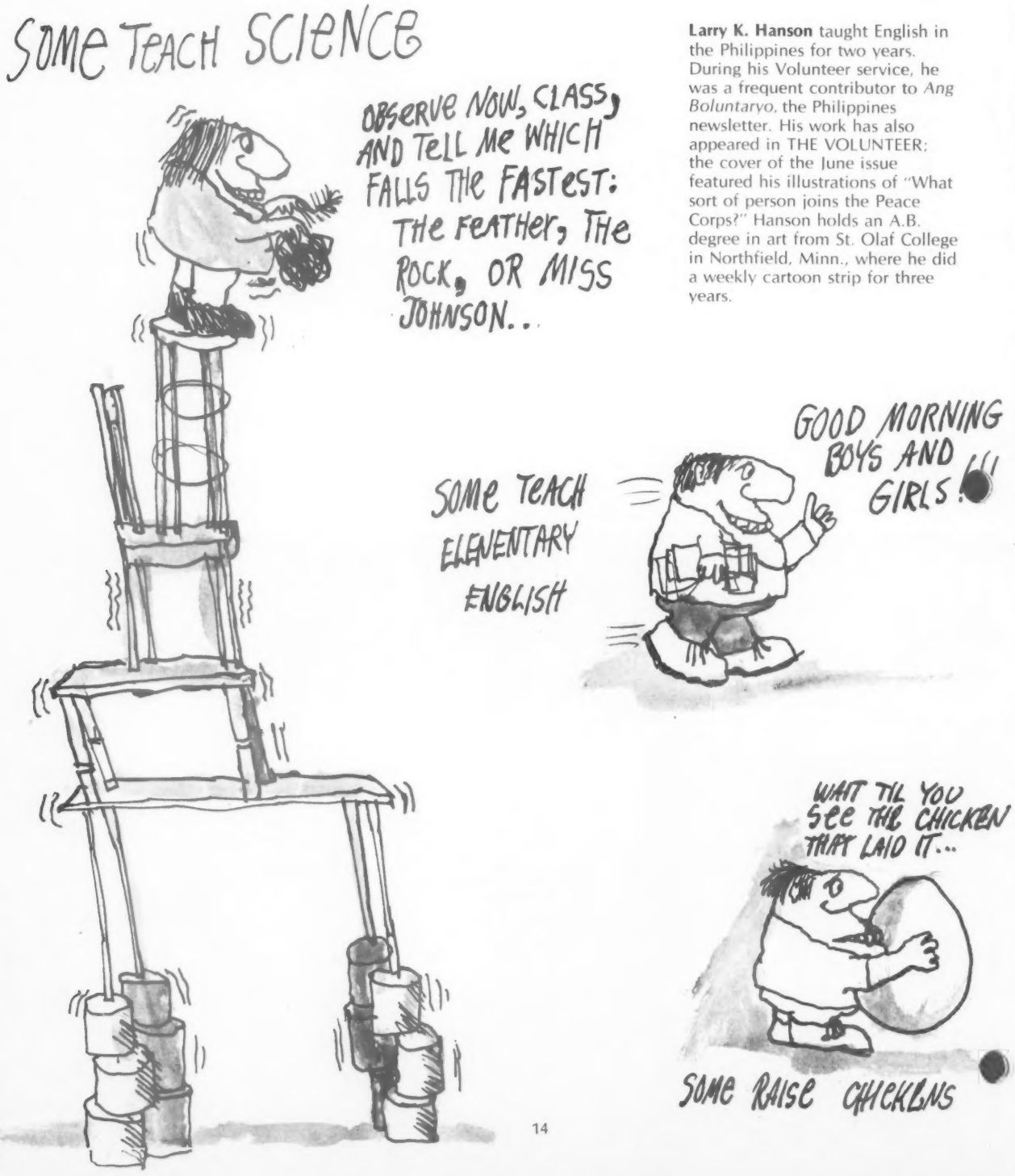
Well do I realize there are always exceptions—that in country X a girl can be a *promotor* and that Fulana de Tal can really swing out in the Llanos. However, I am convinced that the majority of girls need: a structured job under the umbrella of an agency, a counterpart with whom to work, supervision, an urban or small town setting, and specific skills.

And I suggest that host country personnel are the best people to provide realistic skill training—whether it be in the U.S. or in country.

Sally Yudelman was a program officer in the Latin America Region from November, 1967 to August. She also served as Latin America program review officer in the Office of Planning, Program Review and Research for more than two years.

Luise Wheeler and her husband Dennis lived in Guatemala's Peten jungle. They visited coopertives along the river, helping new colonists with problems like child care, cooking and nutrition, adult literacy, dugout canoe construction, fruit growing, planting and marketing.

What Do Peace Corps Volunteers Do?


SOME TEACH SCIENCE
OBSERVE NOW, CLASS, AND TELL ME WHICH FALLS THE FASTEST: THE FEATHER, THE ROCK, OR MISS JOHNSON...
SOME TEACH ELEMENTARY ENGLISH
GOOD MORNING BOYS AND GIRLS!
WAIT TIL YOU SEE THE CHICKEN THAT LAID IT...
SOME RAISE CHICKENS

Larry K. Hanson taught English in the Philippines for two years. During his Volunteer service, he was a frequent contributor to *Ang Boluntaryo*, the Philippines newsletter. His work has also appeared in THE VOLUNTEER; the cover of the June issue featured his illustrations of "What sort of person joins the Peace Corps?" Hanson holds an A.B. degree in art from St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minn., where he did a weekly cartoon strip for three years.

2+2=4
2+3=5
2+4=
NOW, IF I GO TO THE MARKET AND BUY FIFTEEN COCONUTS AT TEN CENTAVOS each...
SOME TEACH MATH
FEE FIE FOE FUM!!!
MY NAME IS CARLOS...
OUR TOWN IS BIG...
I LIVE IN...
NO IT ISN'T...
YES, IT ARE
ON MONDAYS AND FRIDAYS
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE
PEACE CORPS
EXPERIMENTAL BEANS
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?
SOME GROW THINGS
Larry K. Hanson.

What is it like to be a Peace Corps Volunteer when you are a Mexican, Japanese or Chinese-American, a black American, a Puerto Rican? What are some of the problems which "minority group" Volunteers face overseas?

The Colombia newsletter, Porvenir, *recently put these questions to a number of Volunteers. The Volunteers were asked to comment on community reaction to their color or nationality, on any new feelings they themselves may have had about racial bigotry and ethnic rubs in the U.S., and on their relations with fellow Volunteers during training and service.*

Here THE VOLUNTEER *presents six of the responses which appeared in the August issue of* Porvenir.

The 'minority' Volunteer

Dolores Trevino

By DOLORES TREVINO

The inhabitants of Pitalito in southern Huila have grown accustomed to the Volunteers with light hair, blue eyes, and hard-to-understand Spanish. To Colombians, all people from the U.S. are *monos* (light). So when I arrived, looking as Colombians do and speaking Spanish with ease, they just couldn't take me for a Peace Corps Volunteer.

I went to great effort to explain myself. My parents were Mexicans and had many of the same Spanish-Indian features as Colombians. The U.S., I pointed out, is the home of segments of all peoples, and I was just a little part of it.

I thought everything was fine, but by the end of the week (which later turned to a month), I was quite tired of hearing "When will a *gringo* Peace Corps Volunteer come?" or "You're a Mexican and Mexicans don't know as much as *gringos*." I didn't mind the Mexican part, but I did mind the "you don't know." They were making comparisons on features, and I didn't fit the nice, all-American, U.S. standard that had been set up. I grew quite angry when the mayor's daughter, who had met me as the new Peace Corps Volunteer, asked another Volunteer who was visiting when a Volunteer was coming to Pitalito. I told the mayor's daughter I was the Peace Corps Volunteer and planned to stay for two years, and that if she didn't already know it, it was time she found out. I also told her I hadn't come to meet their nice *gringa* stereotype. She looked quite shocked and left without another word. It must have gotten around, because I wasn't asked or told anything about *gringos* anymore. And I was consulted more often and included in noticeably more work.

The *campesinos* and urban people began to respond better than ever. Their disapproval turned to curiosity, and I was given a chance to show my abilities as a Volunteer. Now they often tell me how glad they are to have a *gringa-Mexicana*. My ability to communicate well is the core of this. Knowing that I'm leaving soon, they ask if the new Peace Corps Volunteer will be a *gringo* or *gringo-Mexicano*. They have come to understand that the U.S. has different people, but that we do things basically the same.

Whether a Peace Corps Volunteer is Mexican-American, Negro, Indian, or Anglo-American, he must prove that he is worthy of the confidence of his *pueblo*. We are here to help the

Audrey Miles

Colombians; one large part of this job, especially in cases such as my own, is to have them see and appreciate that our organization, like our country, has many personalities, colors and races.

By AUDREY MILES

I must warn at the outset that my Colombian experiences have taken place in the conservative interior of the country—Chiquinquirá, Boyaca. As a North American, and in terms *of my work*, I am accepted. Since Negroes, however, are almost unheard of there, my acceptance socially is a bit different. I've not had particular difficulties because of my minority status in the U.S. However, I could not work effectively in the schools of Chiquinquirá if I were a Colombian Negro. In talking confidently to a Colombian teacher, I was told that those in the interior feel that a *costeña* (predominantly Negroes) can teach children subject matter, but cannot form them, give them values for living. This teacher, perhaps more open-minded than others in Chiquinquirá, believed this herself.

This shows the importance of a Negro's identifying himself as a North American in order to work well in the interior. But, if he tries to act superior in relating to Colombian counterparts, this will impair normal interpersonal contacts, and put off the social acceptance needed to become an effective co-worker. I am in the process of conquering the false defense of my citizenship. I cannot live here solely as a North American working with Colombians, rather as Audrey Miles working with the teachers in the normal school, the Escuela Alianza, the escuela de la Zona de las Carreteras, etc.

As a newly-arrived Peace Corps Volunteer I was very uncertain about how I should react to being called *costeña, negra,* and *negra fea* (ugly) on the streets. I was angry, hurt, but found that none of the defenses I normally would use in the States worked here. There is definitely a brand of prejudice, but it is very different from what I have known in the States.

In the U.S. I lived hoping for the best in interpersonal, interracial relationships but was never surprised when things turned for the worst. There I could easily distinguish between hatred and ignorance and had learned to react effectively to both. Here they are not so easily distinguishable. A young child saying *costeña* may mean, "Here is someone different from others I know." From another it may mean, "This person talks with a funny accent." But when I sense mockery in their voices I cannot react in a manner satisfying to myself. I can deal with joking, but cannot fight mockery.

Negra fea says much about the Colombian "pecking order." Realizing that I'm not pretty, I still wondered why so many Colombians found it necessary to point it out to me. But gradually I've come to realize that the more *moreno* (dark) one is, the uglier he is in the eyes of the average Colombian. Everyone in Colombia wants to be *blanco* (white), so *negros* are *feos. Negra fea* means, if we can't be white, we must constantly remind you and ourselves that you are darker than we are.

Because it is not possible to distinguish between a *negra Colombiana* and a *negra Estadounidense* (from U.S.) in appearance, I have learned what Colombian men think of *negras costeñas.* I was all but propositioned by the mayor of a town just after being introduced to him. All the dirty old men who know my *compañero* asked him to introduce them to the hot *negra.* It's a fact. In the interior *costeñas* are considered prostitutes, so I've ceased to be surprised, yet continue to be insulted, when some man with dirt in his eyes starts to stare.

Finally, prejudice is ignorance, be it in the U.S. or Colombia. I find living in Colombia difficult because I'm a native daughter of the U.S.A. and have learned through a lifetime how I must act to keep my sanity and dignity there. But what I have learned does not always serve me in the context of Colombian culture.

By ABE MAY

Although I am sure that racial bigotry exists in the U.S., I experienced very little racial discrimination during my 23 years of life as a Negro in New York City. I attended a predominantly white high school and the more predominantly white Brooklyn College of the City University of New York.

During my Peace Corps training program I was informed by a returned Peace Corps Volunteer that racial prejudice exists in Colombia and I would probably encounter it. When in country, it took me two months to get a house in Cúcuta, and the Volunteer that helped me was convinced that this length of time was directly

related to the color of my skin. I was not at all convinced of this. The housing market in Cúcuta is very tight, and being on the Cúcuta team, my house had to be in one of three poor barrios. Other Volunteers, all Caucasians, had the same, if not greater, difficulty in locating housing.

It is quite easy for non-white Americans to refer to setbacks as examples of the racial prejudice that exists in Colombia. Race is a factor, but there are others which have to do with the Latin culture, and specifically the Colombian culture.

During my field training in Mexico, I was very sensitive to the word *negro*. Because I am a black American from a racially tense country, my initial reaction was one of insult. I shortly learned to distinguish the descriptive and derogative use of that frequently used Spanish word. After 19 months some *Cucuteñas* still refer to me as *negro*, but it's not derogatory.

Secondly, there's the thing about anti-Uncle Samism—not all Colombians love *gringos*. Thus, the non-white American has to distinguish between the prejudices against him and those against his country (although it is sometimes difficult).

I personally have been called *mono* (blond or light) and yankee. One would have to be blind to call me *mono*, so I can interpret that as a personal slur. "Yankee" I always interpret as a prejudice against my country and not against me personally. Neither of these words have been directed towards me very much.

I am not trying to say that racial prejudice does not exist in Colombia. I have seen it in the Colombian culture, just as I have seen it in the American culture. It has never affected me or my work in Cúcuta. But because racial prejudice does exist in Colombia, I am concerned about the Puerto Ricans and American Indians that will be coming to Colombia as Peace Corps Volunteers.

Washington's goals as stated in the Peace Corps Act can only be fulfilled if a real cross section of the American society goes through the Peace Corps experience. These goals are a part of the "American Dream." Peace Corps is probably one of the few national bureaucracies that consciously tries to realize that dream.

As for Peace Corps Latin America and Peace Corps Colombia, all, including "WASP" Volunteers, should be informed of the prejudices they will encounter. Recognize that Americans accustomed to discrimination might adjust better than the Anglo-Volunteer who has not lived with it at home. Members from minority groups should have equal opportunity to serve in countries where they may not be received with open arms. They, too, are Americans, and the "American Dream" ought to be expanded to include their participation.

Abe May

By DAVE BUENTELLO

Being of Mexican-American origin, I am quite sensitive to ethnic differences and biases, believe me. I'd like to say at the outset that I've found my fellow Volunteers open and liberal to the extent that I've experienced no obstacles in relating to them.

One of your questions was if being a member of a minority group prejudiced my work. You must realize that certain "minority groups" in the States happen to be "majority groups" in Colombia, and we with Latin backgrounds may have advantages here that the Anglo-American enjoys back home.

I work in Cúcuta near the Venezuelan border. If I don't "pass" for a Colombian I'm taken for a Venezuelan. My ease with the language has of course been an asset; but there's more to feeling close to Colombians. I drink like they do, I sing like they do, I feel and dance (almost) like they do, and we always cut through the *usted* (formal "you") business almost immediately. I like it that way. Often when I'm introduced, it's as Dave Buentello without mention that I'm a *gringo* or a Volunteer.

Yet there are times when it's nice to be an outsider. Though I often feel more at home here than I do back in the Southwest, being a *gringo* has clearly expedited my work when I needed to cut red tape for appointments, etc. And there s no stigma attached to me for associating with uppers and lowers at the same time—they just accept it as a *gringo* oddity.

In short, I mean to point out that your questions are directed at my Mexican-American identity which here gives me no problems. But I have to live two other identities—*gringo* and Volunteer—which, I'm sure most Peace Corps Volunteers will agree, have their own handicaps. Working here with the Peace Corps has taught me that "minority group" is a most relative term—something one can be long in learning if he doesn't leave the States.

By GLENN TAMANAHA

With a name like Tamanaha and the other added features, Colombians did tend to stamp me with a *Chino* label. I am Japanese, not Chinese. This is not to be discriminatory; I just want to keep the records straight.

I would like to think that education

reeds understanding and tolerance, but in the contemporary world this is like saying gasoline is not incendiary. Bringing this thought closer to home, I will honestly have to say that I did encounter racial prejudice, although Colombians will vehemently deny the existence of this social malady in their country.

Back tracking to the point of education and understanding, I will try to dissect the root of the "prejudicial tree" with this hypothesis in mind. I often question myself as to how much knowledge the average Colombian has of the U.S. and its citizenry other than the *gringo* represented as a butchering capitalist or imperialist. This is one of the reasons why the Peace Corps was created, but, being redundant, how much does the average Colombian know of this North American organization? A moot question.

Working up the ladder, I then ask myself what does the Colombian know of the mysterious yellow people of the East? What little knowledge they have of us often rivers out from visual travesties such as Django-and-Millie-type flicks with the bowlegged, buck-toothed Chinese mortician shuffling about in pigeon-toed glee while waiting for a Django massacre. I do think that the Colombians as well as Americans should take a more circumspect and authentic look at the Oriental people.

Glenn Tamanaha

A case of this "circumspect awareness" has come about in the Colombian city of Cali due to a nearby Japanese colony. There, the Japanese people are well-respected, not just as agricultural wizards, but as an industrious and aggressive people—an understanding and acceptance by close association. Cali is not Colombia, however, and Colombia is not Cali, so once outside this sanctuary one runs into the same inaccurate names and labels.

I have nothing against labels per se, but when it becomes an arrow aimed disparagingly at my nationality, then it becomes mortal. You may say that, as an outsider, I should take the initiative to construct a "bridge" (50-50 approach); but if I were to stop everyone that called me a *Chino*, I would have to be explaining my existence 36 hours a day.

You may respond that I should ignore such people and foster friendships with individuals, counterparts, etc. I agree 100 per cent with this theory, for in the Peace Corps we work through an individual-mass conversion concept. However, when I can't play billiards without being harassed by bystanders; when I can't enter a restaurant without hearing *Chino* jokes directed at my presence; when I can't enter a bus without having people whisper, "Mire (look at) al Chino" (like maybe I have four heads); when I can't attend a movie without having a lit cigarette thrown challengingly at my back; then I say to myself, is this the people I am indirectly trying to help?

There are some things that should be inherent and basic to civilized man, and one of these intrinsic things is common courtesy or human kindness. Call it whatever you want, but it still boils down to human respect for your fellow brother, be his skin yellow and may he see or do things with a "slanted outlook."

As a Peace Corps Volunteer and consequently an idealist (I run into

Dave Buentello

arguments here), I would not have stayed here if I didn't think I could have changed part of this social malaise. How do I feel about my relationship with the Colombians now? Well, the few Colombian friends I have know that I am a sensitive human being with feelings and emotions just like them; that I have a capacity to love and hate; that I sleep, eat and drink just like they do and above all that I am Glenn Tamanaha, posing not as a Japanese, an American or a Peace Corps Volunteer, but as an individual asking and demanding respect as an individual.

By DAVE MATSUSHITA

Basically, I have had good reactions from the *campesinos* and townspeople of my area. On my arrival, they asked me whether I was American, to which I explained that I was and why my facial characteristics were not like those of other Volunteers. Typically it would run like this:
Colombian: "You are Chinese?"
Me: "No, I am North American."
Colombian: "But your features are Chinese or Japanese."
Me: "Yes, I am of Japanese descent. My grandparents are from Japan."
Colombian: "Ah, I see. And your parents are also from Japan?"
Me: "No, no. My grandparents are from Japan. I was born in the state of Arkansas and my parents were born in California."

After the initial contact, my being American was not questioned further except by strangers, which was frequent. I often wished that I had a tape recording with which to repeat the answer.

Generally in my area, the response has been friendly with the exception of one drunken school teacher at a *feria* (fair) who said mockingly that I was a North Vietnamese. I remember grabbing him and nearly putting my fist down his throat. He was terrified of me after that, and it wasn't until the last *feria* that we shook hands after some other Volunteers brought him into the room where I was talking and drinking.

In other areas where I was a complete stranger, the response has ranged from a stare to the name calling, *Chino*. This was true also in some parts of Ecuador and Peru. Strangely, I hardly received any response in Bolivia, though it may have been due to the large Japanese colony there.

In parts of these countries where Japanese products such as cars, televisions, oil refineries, etc. were present, nationals seemed to have a higher opinion of foreigners, especially those associated with the products. This seems to hold for the Japanese. Rightly or wrongly, the Chinese do not have the same technologically advanced image, even though the Republic of China is progressing so rapidly that it no longer needs foreign aid (whereas Latin America still does). To this day I do not understand why Latin Americans think lowly of Chinese. Is it that they are ignorant of Chinese culture and history, which are among the greatest in the world, or is it due to something I have failed to perceive? I recall once in Santa Marta when, as I was waiting for someone in a taxi, a Negro *costeño* came up, shouted *Chino*, and stood there glaring at me defiantly. I stared back and finally told him that I was not Chinese but Japanese. He immediately apologized and said how great Japan was, etc. I let him talk, not wanting to confuse him more by saying I was not Japanese Japanese, but an American of Japanese ancestry.

To sum up, I have been called everything from *Chino, Japones, gringo, Filipino,* to *Cubano*. Once I jokingly told a Colombian that I was a Montilone Indian. He believed me.

For the moment, we in the Peace Corps are all Americans—white, black, yellow, brown and red. The reactions I have had with Volunteers has been excellent, and I am sure most of us will behave the same in the States. But how will we react ten years from now when we face neighbors who expound segregation or violence? In my opinion, up to 90 per cent of the American public hold racial prejudices.

I have held the feeling up to this day that the United States is not a democracy but a "hypocracy." I was born in a concentration camp where my family had been sent by *our* government simply because we looked different from most other Americans. Is that democracy? The Negroes continue to suffer and the Mexican-Americans are booted around and called derogatory names. Is that democracy?

Not until everyone gains the rights guaranteed to all by our Constitution will I stop thinking and believing that concentration camps are again possible. Unbelievable? I think it can happen again. To end such a spectre, one must question his conscience profoundly and then go on trying to persuade others that tolerance is the only road to a democratic society. Otherwise, whom are we trying to kid?

Dave Matsushita

LETTERS TO THE VOLUNTEER

THE VOLUNTEER *welcomes letters on all subjects of interest to the Peace Corps. Letters of 300 words or less are most suitable for publication. All letters are subject to condensation.*

On Vietnam program

To THE VOLUNTEER:

Paul Krause's letter calling for a Vietnam program is indicative of much of what has gone wrong with the Peace Corps in recent years. To my mind, the primary purpose of the Peace Corps should be to promote peace. The means to this goal are most important. It is difficult to have peace without understanding. I have found that a shared experience which takes on meaning for the participants presents a base for communication which leads to understanding. It is not so much what you are doing *for* the next man as what you are doing *with* him.

When Paul Krause suggests that "the Peace Corps *initiate* (my italics) a sorely needed program in South Vietnam," I must ask who in South Vietnam has asked for this program? Then, why has he not suggested that Peace Corps be *initiated* in North Vietnam? Has anybody in North Vietnam requested a Peace Corps program? I had always thought that, at least in theory, the Peace Corps filled requests by host countries for Volunteers rather than informing the host country of its needs and then attempting to fill them without consulting the country.

I sincerely believe that the immediate goals of Paul Krause's suggested program would be to "start clearing the cities of the rubble, start rebuilding schools, hospitals, orphanages; getting people to cart away the ruins, people to lay bricks . . ." etc.

He says that the Volunteers exist to perform these menial tasks. Unfortunately these Volunteers probably do exist. But where are the Volunteers willing to work the 10 to 12 hours a day *with* the people clearing this rubble and not telling them what they must do in order to "improve themselves?" Where are the Volunteers willing to give two years of their lives to just simply working with people and accepting them for what they are? Where are the people willing to try to have peace based on understanding? This goes not only for a chauvinistic, ill-conceived South Vietnam program it goes for all programs which take as their starting-off place the assumption that we as Americans must do something for the poor "unfortunates" of the world in order to promote peace.

With this attitude I'd say that the best thing one could do would be to stay home. We would promote peace much better that way.

RICHARD SMITH
Former Volunteer

New York City

As a draft alternative

To THE VOLUNTEER:

I am writing to voice my support of Paul Krause's idea for a rubble clearing and hospital building program in South Vietnam.

I would suggest further that two years in such a program make the male Volunteer exempt from military service and that it be acceptable as an alternative to military service for conscientious objectors.

As a CO in mind and heart, but not on record, I would eagerly rejoin the Peace Corps to serve in such a program if one were ever started.

It would probably be the most difficult program of all to organize because of the domestic as well as Vietnamese political interests it would involve before the organization place could be agreed upon. And once there, how could Volunteers explain the destruction of Vietnam to the Vietnamese?

But rebuilding that country might in itself explain that there are people here who feel there is a better way than the burning out of the poor who still regard the gods and fate as the chief forces in their lives.

We owe this much to the innocent.

JOHN CEPELAK
Former Volunteer

New York City

For RPCV involvement

To THE VOLUNTEER:

I enjoyed reading the June issue of THE VOLUNTEER, especially Lawrence Fuchs' article, "Inside other cultures." I also found myself in strong support of the letter written by Sharon Clarke requesting more reports of Volunteers' direct and personal experiences in the field (photographs are a marvelous addition), and fewer of the intellectualized, analytical articles. Nevertheless, in most of the articles I discovered a kernel sentence or paragraph of real value.

The fact that Selection is so often referred to is evidence of its crucial importance in the success or failure of the Peace Corps. Standards should remain high, but the bases for evaluation should be made known by those responsible for setting up the yardsticks, and they should be constantly re-evaluated in the light of subsequent Volunteer performance and attitudes.

I am a little surprised that I was not called upon by the Peace Corps during or after my service as a Volunteer. I was active in the community upon my return, giving talks and visiting school rooms. But as far as Peace Corps Washington was concerned, I and my comments and experiences were no longer of interest or use to them after I ceased to be a Peace Corps Volunteer. I think that here, often as the distance increases between an ex-Volunteer and his service, is fertile ground for comments and insights which may be of value to today's program.

BETSY S. EVANS
Former Volunteer

Cambridge, England

Editor's note—Terminating Volunteers usually receive information about speaking and other kinds of participation (Peace Corps service councils, organizations of returned Volunteers, the School Partnership Program) in local communities. Interested RPCVs who have been missed should write to: Miss Carol Santry, Speakers Bureau, Peace Corps, Washington, D. C. 20525.

Communion or assistance?

To The Volunteer:

As a trained volunteer who opted to serve in Venezuela on his own rather than with the Peace Corps, I nonetheless have a great deal of contact with the agency and its Volunteers.

And in reading The Volunteer, I realize that my impression of the Volunteer's experience in this country is not unique, as I had thought it was, with respect to hyper-introspectiveness. Frankly, I question the effectiveness of the Peace Corps here; not because of any lack of work, or inadequate training or poor support, but because of a widespread lack of realistically attuned commitment which appears to result in overly frequent and more frequently inappropriate "soul searching."

I do not believe that a developing country should be the site for extended crises, or constant self-evaluation. Evaluation is appropriate after the fact, or at least a substantial part of it, and not before anything—be it concrete or spiritual—is accomplished. The emphasis here seems to be on helping the Volunteer to grow up, to find himself. Such development is fine, but I don't think it is what the Venezuelan government had in mind when it requested Volunteers. In a country just beginning to form a modern personality itself, the need is for skills and strong guidance, not for unapplied, uncommunicable philosophy.

It seems to me that if a person comes to a foreign country to offer assistance, it should be the methods of best serving that country that should occupy his mind and time. Moreover, international understanding would seem to be better served in the joint pursuit of successful enterprise than in discussions of love of mankind. The gaps existing between the average Volunteer and the host country national are vast—culturally, economically and spiritually. It is unrealistic and wasteful to concentrate on directly seeking communion at this point; rather concentrate on assistance to narrow the gap.

The job in Venezuela is to integrate the majority of the people into the economy and the society, and the Volunteer is in a position to help. Moreover, he has an obligation to do so, having sworn to serve, and having the tools to do the work.

Suspecting what was to come, I rejected the Peace Corps as a vehicle of service, but I still believe it can be made more effective. It seems, however, that a switch in emphasis is in order: to realize again that the national interest depends on enfranchising the "masses" as well as the development of American personnel might be a first step.

Joseph Shafran

Caracas, Venezuela

Grace, and a ticket home

To The Volunteer:

The fact that under current Peace Corps policy Volunteers may be officially terminated up to a month early for job or school commitments only, and that most Volunteers terminating earlier than a month for any reason are usually "fined" at least the cost of their passage home, raises some interesting issues.

The reasons defined as just cause for terminating a month early—a job or school commitment (work and preparation for work) fit a narrow, if characteristic idea of what is considered more important than finishing Peace Corps service. A particular irony is that many people joined Peace Corps because they thought the Peace Corps was more important than "work" or "preparation for work." Thus from one vantage point, to make these the criteria of early termination is strange; to make them the only official criteria is stranger still.

Aren't we then being rewarded to join the "system" and punished for decisions which may be equally valid but somehow "irrevelant"—a decision to marry, for instance, or to leave a job because it can make no further contribution to personal growth or social change? If the Peace Corps isn't willing to accept less specific reasons for a Volunteer's desire to leave, then it isn't willing to accept reasons that were a considerable part of our desire to join the Peace Corps in the first place.

There is nothing inherently fulfilling or even very valuable about being a Peace Corps Volunteer (certainly this myth of instant fulfillment is one root of current disenchantment); only in the individual Volunteer's situation and his response to it can meaning be created. When a Volunteer decides this is no longer possible, particularly toward the end of his service, isn't this sufficient reason for an honorable and paid departure?

Despite the two-year "contract" which I readily agree is of some value both to the organization and the Volunteer, we are Volunteers. Our commitment is essentially voluntary and not contractual. The complaint here is that Peace Corps administrators often see us as employees, not Volunteers; as replaceable but necessary parts in a service machine. I don't think Volunteers should be penalized or made to feel guilty for terminating a period of voluntary service "early." One expects a little grace from the Peace Corps, or even a little intelligence from an organization which apparently needs as much good will as possible, especially from ex-Volunteers.

Again, in a related way, the price of passage home, which in some cases is considerable, is used as a carrot stick to keep Volunteers in country for reasons which usually have nothing to do with either the Volunteer or the host country, but may have everything to do with a country director's need to appear effective in the eyes of Peace Corps Washington. If this is true, then Washington and the "system" are to blame for putting irrevelant pressure on a country director, and thus on the Volunteer. Why not eliminate the carrot sticks? Why not make the Peace Corps what it was always intended to be—a voluntary service organization?

Bradford L. Dessery

Tegucigalpa, Honduras

On RFK: waiting for hope

To The Volunteer:

I would suggest that the Wolof people of Senegal, who are characteristically non-violent, send a "peace corps" to the United States.

Robert Kennedy's concern for the African countries and people is not and will not be forgotten. Upon his visit to Africa two years ago he spoke about the "challenge of youth," which has since manifested itself around the world. He expressed his optimism concerning "human freedom" and "human dignity," black and white. He instilled hope in the African people that with international cooperation, illiteracy, hunger and sickness could someday be overcome.

Robert Kennedy's words of hope and optimism for Africans and Americans are understood in a thousand languages. The violence that attacked

him is not understood in any language.

The Voice of America speaks to Africa. We're waiting to hear that there is still some of the hope that Robert Kennedy brought to Africa left in America.

My reaction to the news of Robert Kennedy: shame, deep sorrow for all of us, isolation, yet hope.

CAROLE DOMINGUEZ
St. Louis, Senegal

The 'good' Volunteer

TO THE VOLUNTEER:

I have seen it three or four times in THE VOLUNTEER, and I disagree—oh, I disagree—not only with the statement itself, but also with all its implications. The latest was in Dom S. Gulotta's letter (July-August): "(Volunteers) are successful in proportion to the degree of their individual sincerity." And the previous times it has been practically the same wording.

How can such a gross oversimplification be made? A Volunteer may have all the sincerity in the world—along with all the other aspects of the "good" Volunteer—but still draw a blank in his situation. Does this mean there is something wrong with the Volunteer? Maybe . . . maybe not. There are situations in which brick walls are just too massive to be climbed over, dug under, beaten down, or sneaked around.

The argument could be made that such situations are pretty rare. Very definitely common, however, are what could be called the "impossible combinations." A soft-spoken, non-assertive person may find himself in a situation which calls for a fairly aggressive approach. Or a person who works well in a fairly structured situation may be placed in an unstructured one. Is the Volunteer by some superhuman effort supposed to revamp his personality? This would call for putty-like plasticity, not mere flexibility. Does it then mean that the Volunteer is not a "good" Volunteer?—even though he might do very well in a different situation?

Equating "success" with only one or two variables when in fact it is such a complex situation with no absolutes whatsoever causes only misunderstanding and frustration—on the part of the Volunteers themselves as well as everyone else.

JAMES HUGHSON
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Memorandum

TO : The field
FROM : The editors
SUBJECT: Swinging out

DATE: October, 1968

At their termination conference in Tunisia, members of Group VII remembered what someone had forgotten two years before—they had never been officially sworn in as Peace Corps Volunteers. The Volunteers convinced Louis Mitchell, deputy director of the North Africa, Near East, South Asia Region, that they could not leave Tunisia without partaking in the ceremony. So, on a Sunday afternoon on the main street in Tabarka, Mitchell (above) administered the oath to (from left) Betty Jean Hoffmann, Ruth Mulvihill, Pat Franklin, Marcia Sutherland, and Betty Martin.

□ □ □

Meanwhile, in Honduras, Groups VI and VII chose a different means of celebrating their two years in the Peace Corps. On a hilltop on the outskirts of Tegucigalpa, the Volunteers threw their first (and last) pig roast. It was a gala affair, conspicuously geared by community organization techniques. There was, to mention a few, a pig committee (in charge of overseeing the butchering and stuffing of three pigs), a pig spit committee (in charge of overseeing the production of custom-made spits), and a chefs' hat committee (in charge of scrounging hats and their substitutes). The party planning structure even included a committee in charge of the committees, which reviewed decisions such as how many pigs should be purchased. Here Volunteer Mike Hancock is shown at work on his assigned job—head pig chef. Hancock admitted to having no previous experience with pigs and their roasting, but he displayed that much-invoked Peace Corps characteristic—flexibility.

Involvement is real job

To THE VOLUNTEER:

A Volunteer's job assignment is an excuse for being, not the reason for being. We do our jobs as best we can, but that is only the jumping-off point for an involvement in the daily life of the host country people; this is the necessary prerequisite for effective "off-duty" work. We cannot spend our leisure time only with other Peace Corps Volunteers, or worse, with other expatriates. It is extremely difficult for new Volunteers to break away from their familiar countrymen to talk to the host country nationals in a language they imperfectly understand. But it is necessary.

The Volunteers in Africa and perhaps other parts of the world solve their daily problems by hiring a servant: the saddest aspect of the Peace Corps way of life as it has developed. If the American public realized the extensive use of servants by Peace Corps Volunteers, they would be horrified. The egalitarian tendencies of the American people are one of their nicest attributes and it is a shame that the Peace Corps has lost it.

A servant shields the Volunteer from the local people and the local way of life. A cook, forming his own opinions of how other foreigners live, soon dictates the expatriate way of life to the Volunteer. A houseboy imposes his views on the master without the "master" ever realizing it. A "boy" insulates the Peace Corps Volunteer, clouds his picture of the country, and hinders a proper understanding of the life, aspirations, and trials of the local population.

The sad aspect is that there are so many other possibilities that are more natural and advantageous. Let me give some examples. Someone can be hired part-time to do washing. A poor student can be invited to live with the Volunteer. The Volunteer can team up with a local bachelor and share the work. He can even do it himself—another admirable American custom. The point is that the Volunteer can only understand and become a part of the local scene if he gets involved in the daily activities of normal life—cooking, going to the store, cleaning house, etc.

Anyone involved in the daily life of the local people will soon see what needs improvement: the water supply is lousy; the people don't have enough protein in their diet; they have no vision of the future; their agricultural practices could be improved; child-care methods are unsatisfactory; ad infinitum. The Volunteer should take stock of his assets: they are three. 1) He knows what a developed country is like and so he has a good concept of the goal that is aimed at, 2) He has the education and resources to read the proper books, ask the right people, and in general to develop new ideas and methods, and 3) He has the money and security to take the chance on failure.

DAVID ZAREMBKA

Chebara, Kenya

Swaziland, Nicaragua to receive Volunteers

Peace Corps Volunteers will go to Swaziland, in southern Africa, and to Nicaragua, in Central America, by the end of the year.

Most of the 42 Volunteers in the first Swaziland program will work in education and rural community development. The 47 Volunteers scheduled to go to Nicaragua will be involved in rural health, agricultural extension and fisheries programs.

Both country directors are former Peace Corps staff members. William Armstrong, who will head the Swaziland program, was an associate director in Ethiopia. Donald Cameron, director for Nicaragua, has been deputy director in Guatemala and was an associate director in Chile after serving as a Volunteer in the Dominican Republic.

Peace Corps anthology

Prose and poetry for a proposed anthology of Peace Corps experiences is being collected by two former Volunteers.

John Coyne and Michael Prewitt, both of whom served in Ethiopia—where Mr. Coyne also spent two years as an associate director—seek fiction and poetry related to the overseas experience, and written by Volunteers and staff. Manuscripts will be judged on their literary quality. Material should be sent to: John Coyne, 1618 21st St., N.W., Washington, D. C. 20009.

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